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Message Text

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ACTION EB-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05 CIAE-00 SP-02 L-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1356

S E C R E T SANTIAGO 8956

LIMDIS

FOR THE SECRETARY AND SECRETARY SIMON FROM AMBASSADOR POPPER

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PFOR CI
SUBJECT: CHILE: LITTLE COMFORT IN PINOCHET'S THIRD ANNIVERSARY SPEECH

1. ON SEPTEMBER 11, THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSUMPTION OF POWER BY THE CHILEAN JUNTA, PRESIDENT PINOCHET DELIVERED A MAJOR ADDRESS WHICH PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASSESS THE EFFECT OF YOUR REPRESENTATIONS WITH THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTION.

2. I REGRET TO REPORT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S DECLARATION CONTAINS LITTLE OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO US. ON THE WHOLE, AS THE EMBASSY IS REPORTING IN DETAIL, THE SPEECH WAS A HARD-LINE REAFFIRMATION OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PRACTICES.

3. THE PRESIDENT'S ONLY REFERENCE TO RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES READS AS FOLLOWS: "AS FOR OUR TIES WITH THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA, IN SPITE OF OBSTACLES THAT SOME POLITICAL ELEMENTS OF THAT COUNTRY HAVE PERSISTENTLY CREATED, EVEN TO THE POINT OF BREACHING RULES AND PRINCIPLES OF INTERNATIONAL LAW, OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE ON A GOOD FOOTING. THE PERSONAL CONTACT

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THAT THE CHIEF OF STATE WHO IS SPEAKING (I.E. PINOCHET)

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HAD IN SANTIAGO WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE MR KISSINGER
LAST JUNE CONTRIBUTED IMPORTANTLY TO THIS; SO LIKEWISE
DID THE POSITIVE VIEW OF OUR ECONOMIC PROGRESS THAT
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY MR SIMON WAS ABLE TO RECOGNIZE
AND DIVULGE DURING HIS VISIT TO CHILE".

4. CONTRARY TO OUR HOPES, THE SPEECH GIVES US NO REASON
TO EXPECT ANY IMMINENT LIBERALIZATION OF THE GOC'S
HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES. ON THE CONTRARY, THE TONE IS
ONE OF A NEED FOR CONTINUED AND EVEN INCREASING AUTHORI-
TARIANISM, TOGETHER WITH AN INSISTENCE THAT ONLY MILITARY
GOVERNMENT OVER A PROLONGED PERIOD CAN CREATE THE CON-
DITIONS FOR A NEW DEMOCRATIC ORDER IN CHILE. NOT ANNOUNCED
IN THE SPEECH WAS A DECISION THE SAME DAY TO RELEASE 205
ADDITIONAL POLITICAL PRISONERS HELD UNDER THE STATE OF
SIEGE. THIS IS WELCOME, BUT DOES NOT INDICATE THAT DE-
TENTIONS AND "DISAPPEARANCES" HAVE CEASED TO OCCUR IN
CHILE. THEY STILL DO OCCUR.

5. THE CONSTITUTIONAL ACTS -- SECTIONS OF AN AS YET
UNCOMPLETED NEW CONSTITUTION -- CHICH THE PRESIDENT
PROMISED TO PROMULGATE IN THIS SPEECH ARE NOW ON THE
RECORD. ONE OF THEM DEALS WITH CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS
AND DUTIES. WHILE ELABORATE, IT ABOUNDS IN QUALIFICATIONS
WHICH VITIATE MUCH OF ITS SUBSTANCE. MOREOVER, THE EXERCISE
OF RIGHTS CONTINUES TO BE SUBJECT TO THE RESTRICTIONS IM-
POSED DURING PERIODS OF STATE OF SIEGE. THESE EMERGENCY
POWERS ARE THEMSELVES RECODIFIED IN A SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL ACT.
CONTRARY TO OUR HOPE, PRESIDENT PINOCHET DID NOT TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF THE OCCASION TO REDUCE THE LEVEL AND SEVERITY
OF THE STATE OF SIEGE, AS HE HAS PREVIOUSLY DONE ON JUNTA
ANNIVERSARIES.

6. THE CULMINATING POINT IN THE SPEECH WAS A STERN
WARNING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S DEMOCRATIC CRITICS THAT IT
INTENDED DRASTICALLY TO TIGHTEN UP THE CURRENT "POLITICAL
PARTY RECESS IN ORDER TO CUT OFF EFFORTS TO REVERT TO AN EARLIER
POLITICAL SYSTEM OR TO OPPOSE THE REGIME. IN THIS CONTEXT
THE SPEECH MUST BE READ AS AN INJUNCTION AGAINST FURTHER
CRITICISM AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY BY DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL
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FIGURES, CHURCH LEADERS AND INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONISTS.
A SIMILAR THREAT IS DIRECTED TO THE PRESS AND MEDIA.

7. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, THE SPEECH GENERALLY MAINTAINS
THE CURRENT POLICY LINE, THOUGH THERE URE INDICATIONS
THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S AUSTERITY POLICY WILL BE SOMEWHAT
RELAXED IN 1977 AND THAT SOCIAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES
WILL BE INTENSIFIED.

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8. RELATED TO ALL THE FOREGOING, YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED
THAT THE GOC HAS FAILED TO REACH AN ACCOMMODATION WITH
THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION WORKING GROUP
TO END THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THEM OVER THE ABRUPT CAN-
CELLATION OF THE WORKING GROUP'S VISIT IN JULY 1975.
THE WORKING GROUP REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE FORTH-
COMING UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL PROBABLY BE
AT LEAST AS NEGATIVE AS PREVIOUS REPORTS. PINOCHET GAVE
NO HINT OF FLEXIBILITY ON THIS SUBJECT.

9. ACCORDINGLY, WHILE CHILE'S HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES
ARE GENERALLY NO WORSE THAN THOSE OF OTHER SOUTHERN CONE
STATES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO FORESEE ANY IMPROVEMENT IN
OUR PROBLEMS WITH CHILE OVER HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS IN
THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.
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